

St Mary's Monthly News

Free or by Donation

October 2016



From the Parish Priest

Harvest Festival has never made a lot of sense to me. I am a city slicker to my finger tips and I have spent most of my life living in cities and urban areas. Talk of field ploughing, cabbages and the fruits of the season leave me feeling pretty cold. When I was a vicar in Lincolnshire many of my parishioners were farmers and worked on the land. For the first time harvests became a reality for me as I watched my friends rise at first light to gather their crops and listened to them lament about the weather with genuine concern. What does harvest mean to us in Prestwich? As we celebrate our **Harvest Festival on October 2nd** we will be focussing on the generosity of God, the blessings God brings to our lives and our material well-being. We will be praying for farm workers throughout the world and we will be reflecting on the inter connectedness which food brings to our lives. When I eat carrots from Spain and aubergines from Peru I am brought closer to the lives of the citizens of those nations, we

learn to rely on each other and our lives are brought closer together. The politics of food is much debated at the moment but the theology of food is less talked about. Last year almost 1 million people in the UK used Food Banks. Porch Boxes bring essential food and toiletries to local people and in this newsletter you can read about the Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter. God has blessed our world with an abundance of food and natural resources and yet so many people live with hardship and shortage. The Gospel of Christ calls us to be builders of a just and peaceful world. It is no accident that Jesus turned water into wine, fed the 5000 and left us the Eucharist: the great feast of heaven. God clearly cares about our physical as well as our spiritual nourishment. We believe in a God of abundant generosity who leads us to be people of action. If you don't already bring donations of food and toiletries for Porch Boxes please consider starting to do so. What else could you do this harvest to make the promise of the Gospel real for those who are hungry?

With love, Chris (Parish Priest)

Mission at St Mary's

The Parochial Church Council met last month to agree priorities in the next stage of our parish **Mission Action Plan**. This Plan serves as a reference point for our mission into the future and it is regularly reviewed by the PCC. The week of "*Going Deeper*" events held earlier in the year formed part of the Plan. Within our overall parish vision of "Growing, Giving, Serving", the next stage Mission

Action Plan has four key themes: 1) we aim to be inclusive; 2) worship and prayer are at the heart of our lives; 3) we seek to put the Gospel into action; 4) giving is a joy not a duty. With these values in mind, the PCC has agreed a number of practical priorities to take forward over the coming months, including planning for increased parish outreach ("*Going Outwards*"), a continued focus on financial stability; and working to provide more opportunities for prayer, including developing a regular pattern of healing services. More information on these and other plans will follow - please continue to pray for the Church Wardens and members of the PCC, as they work with the Parish Priest to lead our future mission and ministry at St Mary's.

Inclusive Church News



The annual lecture of the Inclusive Church movement took place at Liverpool Cathedral over the summer. Loretta Minghella, Chief Executive of Christian Aid, spoke about issues of poverty and gender justice with the title: **Does Poverty Have a Woman's Face?** The text of the lecture and a You Tube recording is available on the Inclusive Church website www.inclusive-church.org (then search for events). St Mary's is a member of the Inclusive Church network.

The American Church



Last year the Most Reverend Michael Curry (pictured above) became presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church (the Anglican Church) in the United States of America - the first black presiding bishop in the history of the church. The American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has recorded a short interview with Bishop Curry during which he reflects on his first months in the role at a time of challenge and change, and speaks powerfully about inclusion in the church. To view the 8 minute interview on Youtube, go to the PBS website www.youtube.com/user/PBSNewsHour and search for Michael Curry.



The Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter scheme will run again this year, starting during October 2016. Here Lynn Savage reflects on her involvement in the pilot scheme:

"I've always thought of myself as a practical Christian. I enjoy doing and getting involved and so I volunteered to help with a pilot

Winter Shelter scheme at the beginning of this year – a partnership between Manchester diocese and the Church Urban Fund saw 6 churches offering shelter to up to 12 homeless men during the months of January, February and March 2016. I volunteered for the early morning shift for two days each week starting at roughly 6.00 and ending at 9.30. Monday was spent at the Church of the Apostles' in Miles Platting, whilst I travelled to Christ Church Brunswick near Ardwick Green on Tuesday. I had no idea what to expect only that I would be mixing with men who usually sleep rough and all the pictures that this conjures up in one's mind. So it was with great shame that I soon realized that under well-worn clothes, less than perfect hygiene and possessions in anything from suit cases to carrier bags, were many lovely people from different countries, backgrounds and cultures who had fascinating stories to tell. Some were refugees, some coming to this country looking for work, some who had fallen on hard times. During the three months over 500 bed spaces were taken up. Several men remained for the whole period whilst others were accommodated for a short time. So, what did I do there? Made and handed out toast, cereals, fruit and hot drinks, washed up, cleared away the beds and bedding, helped them with newer clothes and shoes but most importantly chatted to the guests and volunteers about anything and everything. At times it was hard to detect who were the guests and who were the volunteers. A spin-off was forging friendships with other volunteers. As well as visiting

other volunteers churches I now help out at Food 4 All at The Apostles 'Miles Platting where I, and an army of volunteers, prepare and serve a choice of hot food for over 60 people, this includes people who live in the area and the homeless, in fact anyone who wants a hot meal. All the food is donated and recipes are conjured up according to what is available. This church opens its doors every Sunday from 4-8.30 and provides clothes, shoes and food to take away as well as a social gathering with lots of friendly banter and laughs. There is information on a host of organisations that offer help and advice and personal advice from appropriate people if needed. Such was the success of the Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter that it's going to run for 6 months this year October 2016 – March 2017 with more host centres. I would not hesitate to recommend volunteering - see <https://gmwns.wordpress.com> to get a taste of it or have a chat with me. I love itbut then, I've always been a practical Christian."

A floral demonstration (by Robie) – with proceeds going to the Winter Night Shelter - will be held at St Mary's on Sunday 30 October at 1430-1700. £5 admission including tea & cake. Floral arrangements will be raffled at the end of the event.



At the 1030 All Age Eucharist on **Sunday 6 November** we shall celebrate First Holy Communion for a group of our young people.

Diary Dates

Sunday 2 October – Harvest Thanksgiving

Sunday 16 October – Celebration of Youth Ministry at the 1030 Eucharist, with Susie Mapledoram preaching

Sunday 23 October – Prestwich Hospital Service, with the Bishop of Manchester presiding

Sunday 30 October – All Saints Sunday

Sunday 30 October - Floral demonstration - proceeds for Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter

**1 in 4 OF US
WILL EXPERIENCE
MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS
IN OUR LIFETIMES.**

Prestwich Hospital Sunday 2016

The Bishop of Manchester will preside at a memorial Eucharist on Sunday 23 October at 1030 when we shall once again remember the more than 6000 former patients of Prestwich Hospital who are buried in our churchyard in unmarked graves.

Below **Bishop Stephen Conway (Bishop of Ely)** reflects on **Mental Health and the Gospel.**

“Like many of you, I have been close to a number of people who have struggled with poor mental health. I became my late father’s carer in the last years of his life. It was only then that I recognised how we had colluded as a family in not knowing about his mental state for years. He was relatively well supported; but this did not prevent his early death as a result of the physical consequences of his struggle with life.

Research reveals that nine out of ten people in Britain who live with some form of mental illness are stigmatised. As if the illness were not enough to cope with, they are penalised in the workplace and over welfare benefits. They are shunned and laughed at. Worse still, moral blame is still applied to those living with persistent mental illness. We are frightened of it because it is so close to us and any one of us can fall prone to it in some form. It is also scary that, while there can be periods of recovery in any illness, the condition itself may well be chronic and incurable.

Understandably, we all dread that prospect for ourselves or for our loved ones; but it does not follow that we should blame sufferers for reminding us of their need. The media do not help. Of course, it is a tragedy if a psychotic person becomes dangerous and does serious harm to another person. The way that this is often reported suggests that people with mental health needs are likely to be dangerous. The sad truth is that most of those who suffer psychosis, or clinical depression or severe bi-polar illness are only likely to be a danger to themselves as they feel they can no longer endure the isolation and pain.

The gospel record reveals that it was the wandering bedlamites of Judaea and Galilee who first recognised who Jesus really was. Like shepherds and tax collectors and other outsiders, they became his special care. People came to hear him preach because they had first heard or witnessed his power as the kind of healer who could bring peace to a person with multiple personalities called Legion. I often reflect on the person of Mary Magdalene who is set free from her prison of tormented illness to be the apostle to the apostles. A powerful sculpture of Mary as an old woman by Donatello reveals someone who bears the marks of her illness still, but is on the front foot ready to be a witness of the love which could reach even her lowest depths.

Not so long ago I confirmed someone who lives with severe mental illness who joked that, after being committed to hospital twenty-eight times, at last his religious delusions were being taken seriously. It behoves us as Christians to welcome those who come to our churches and to work directly for much better social inclusion, both for sufferers and for their carers. Research commissioned by the Department of Health concluded that faith, worship and fellowship can have a profound therapeutic impact upon the wellbeing of people living with mental illness. Isolation and despair are met by belonging and hope. We know of conspicuous examples of very talented people with a bi-polar condition who make and have made significant contributions to our history and culture. There are talented but poorly people worshipping with us who not only need our prayer and loving staying power but who also deserve our respect for their humanity and for what they offer as witnesses to God. They offer us insight into the Saviour who abides with us and knows us when all props are taken away and when even our identity is threatened.”

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Praying for our Young People

On **Sunday 16 October** at the 1030 Eucharist we are celebrating our mission among young people, with preacher Susie Mapledoram, Youth Officer for the Diocese of Manchester. *Heavenly Father we pray for the young people of our Parish. Draw close to them - help them to grow in your love and to walk in your spirit. Give them grace and wisdom as they face the challenges of life. Guide them into all truth, we pray, and bring them to your everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

Regular worship at St Mary's



Sunday

0800 Eucharist
1030 Sung Eucharist

Tuesday

0730 Morning Prayer*

Wednesday

0730 Morning Prayer*
1000 Eucharist

Thursday

0730 Eucharist*
1000 Pre-School Praise

Friday

0730 Morning Prayer*
0915 Eucharist in St Mary's School

Services marked * take place in the Oratory at the Rectory, Church Lane.

Our new Head Teacher

Last month we welcomed Mrs Jones as the new Head Teacher

of St Mary's School. We look forward to her participation in the life of the parish.

Children are a valued part of our community.

Junior Church meets on Sunday at 1030. The Prestwich Mission Partnership **Youth Group** meets on Sunday at 1830. **The 22nd Prestwich Scout Group** meets on weekday evenings. **Pre-School Praise** is on Thursdays at 1000. We enjoy a close relationship with our **Parish School**. More information at: www.stmarysprestwich.org/church-groups.



Harvest Thanksgiving will take place on **Sunday 2 October**. Please bring gifts of non-perishable foods to be donated to Porch Boxes See www.porchboxes.org.uk for more information.



No Christian is solitary. Through baptism we become members one of another in Christ, members of a company of saints whose mutual belonging extends beyond death. As Charles Wesley wrote: *"One family, we dwell in him, one Church, above, beneath; though now divided by the stream, the narrow stream of death."* All Saints' Day celebrates

this mutual belonging by marking men and women in whose lives the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work. It is an opportunity to give thanks for that grace, and for the wonderful ways in which it shapes lives; it is a time to be encouraged by the example of the saints and to recall that holiness may grow in the ordinary circumstances, as well as the extraordinary crises, of human living. **This year at St Mary's we will celebrate All Saints Sunday on 30 October.**

Sunday Gospel Readings



2 October

0800 Matthew 9: 1-8
1030 Luke 17: 5-10

9 October

0800 Matthew 22: 1-14
1030 Luke 17: 11-19

16 October

0800 John 4: 46-end
1030 Luke 18: 1-8

23 October

0800 Matthew 18: 21-end
1030 Luke 18: 9-14

30 October

0800 Matthew 5: 1-12
1030 Luke 6: 20-31

Contact us

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